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Executive Summary

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Community Activity Center Concept

An Army post is like a city. The quality of life is dependent on each person having a sense of identification with his or her community - the whole installation, and the troop unit or family neighborhood. This is important for maintaining morale and supporting the Installation Commander in fulfillment of the post mission. The placement and character of community programs and facilities can greatly affect the sense of community.

The Community Activity Center concept is that of grouping community facilities to build or reinforce a pattern of community life on post. This means bringing together Morale Support Activities and other morale, welfare, recreation and community support programs so that facilities compliment each other, creating a lively center of activity (see figure 1 - 1). Functions previously operated and accommodated independently are housed in a shared Center consisting either of a single building or related complex of buildings. Community Activity Centers serve the entire post population, including troops and families. They can achieve improved program effectiveness, coordinated operation, savings in maintenance and operational costs, and more efficient staff utilization.

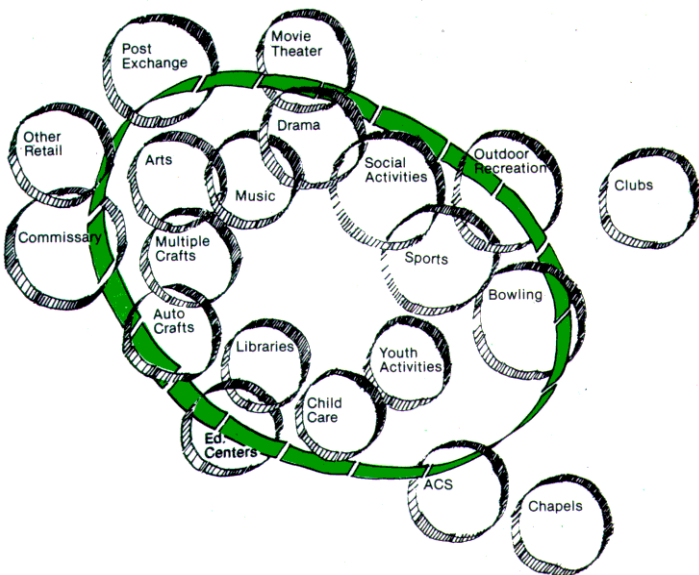


Figure 1 - 1 Community Activity Center Concept

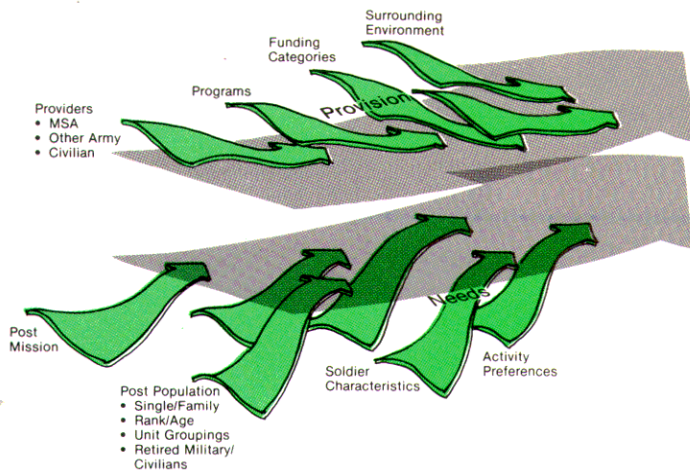


Figure 1 - 2 Responsive to Local Factors

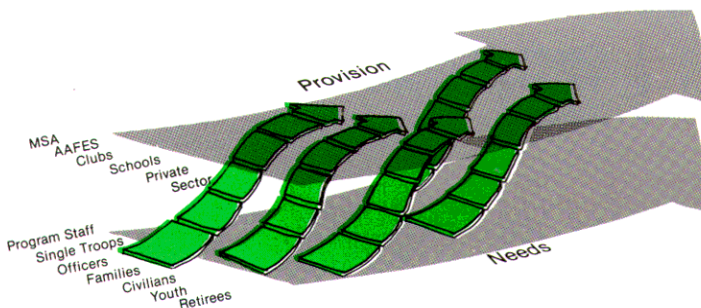


Figure 1 - 3 Continuous Development

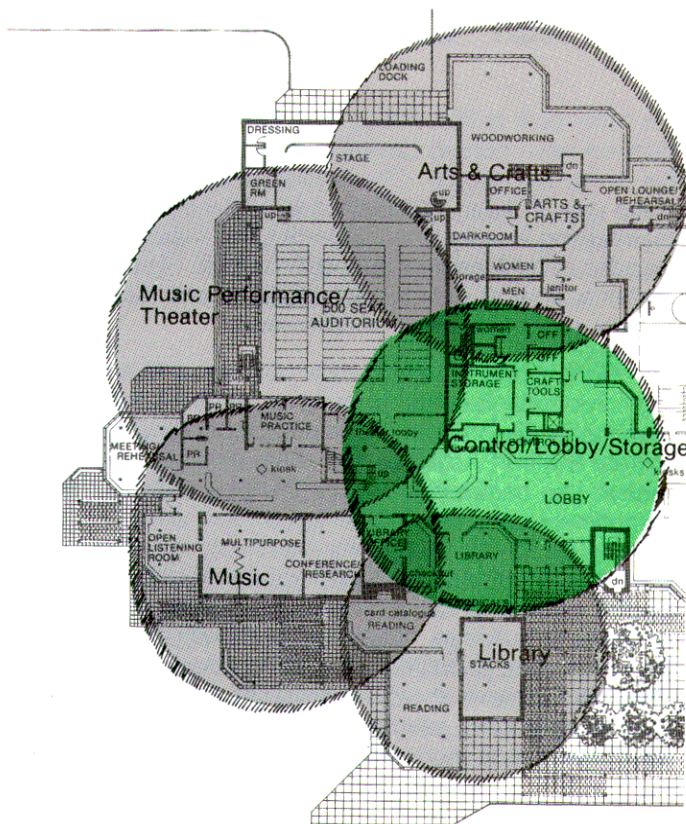


Figure 1 - 4 Consolidation

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Planning Principles

The role of Morale Support Activities in developing the community system is to stimulate, coordinate and support the activities which build a sense of community. The planning of this system, and the development of Community Activity Centers, should be based on the following key principles:

a. Responsive to Local Factors. Providing good community life requires coordination among, and response to, many factors to achieve an appropriate local pattern. These factors include the user needs of the diverse groups within the population, their activity preferences as they change over time, the characteristics and evolution of the post mission, and the multiplicity of provider organizations which must be involved (see figure 1 - 2).

b. Continuous Development. Development of Community Activity Centers is a continuous and evolving process directed toward providing the programs, services and facilities that best suit the needs of the community. A community framework is required to guide the development of the community system, and to enable it to respond to shifts in needs and available resources. The community system must be designed with flexibility in order to accommodate future requirements. This flexibility may be achieved through the additive, phased construction of facilities. (see figure 1 - 3).

c. Variety and Personal Choice. People's quality of life and their ability to grow are dependent on the opportunity to make choices, particularly in leisure-time activities. To maximize this potential, the community system must provide a mix of functions from which individual users can choose. This mix of activities should be highly visible, convenient and fit easily into a pattern of daily life.

d. Consolidation. Suitable programs previously operated and accommodated separately should be consolidated as much as possible. This kind of Community Activity Center will enable more programs to be provided over longer hours for the same cost. In particular, this will achieve: both initial and long term facility cost savings, by eliminating duplication of services; staffing economies; coordination, cross-fertilization and improvement of programs; increased program use, availability and convenience for all installation population groups; and the development of the sense of community (see figure 1 - 4).

1 - 3

Design

a. **Types of Community Activity Centers.** MSA and other community facilities are divided into two broad categories: specialized and consolidated. Specialized facilities are oriented to the needs of a single program. Consolidated facilities are designed to accommodate multiple, coordinated programs. These consolidated Community Activity Centers are further divided into two types:

(1) Main Post Centers. These accommodate all or most MSA functions which serve the entire post. They are often located together with facilities such as the main exchange, commissary, other post-wide commercial and community service facilities (see illustration, figure 1 - 5). They provide a central focus for post life, a function similar to that of the downtown in a small city or town. Main Post Centers may be single structures or complexes of buildings which individually may be specialized.

(2) Local Centers. These serve individual housing or population areas and can be programmed for troops, families, or both groups. They provide a focus for the local neighborhood within walking distance, and neighborhood-scale leisure, commercial and service activities. Local Centers vary in size and in the number of people served. They may be small and include primarily non-specialized activities, or larger and include many specialized activities (see examples in figure 1 - 5).

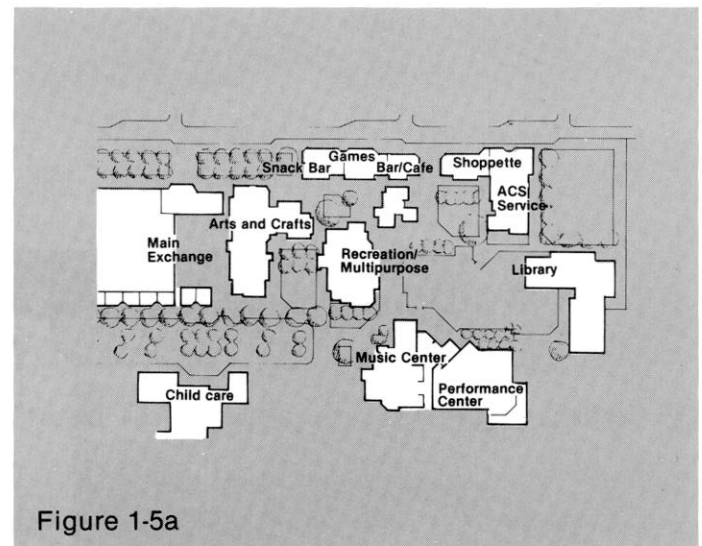


Figure 1-5a

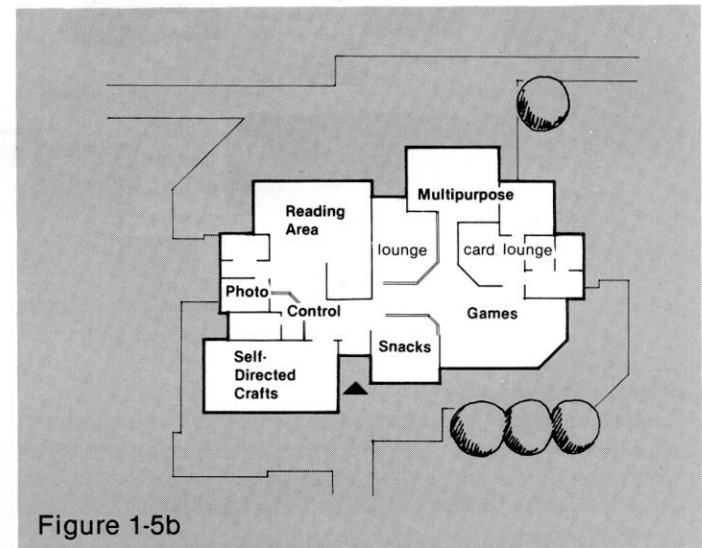


Figure 1-5b

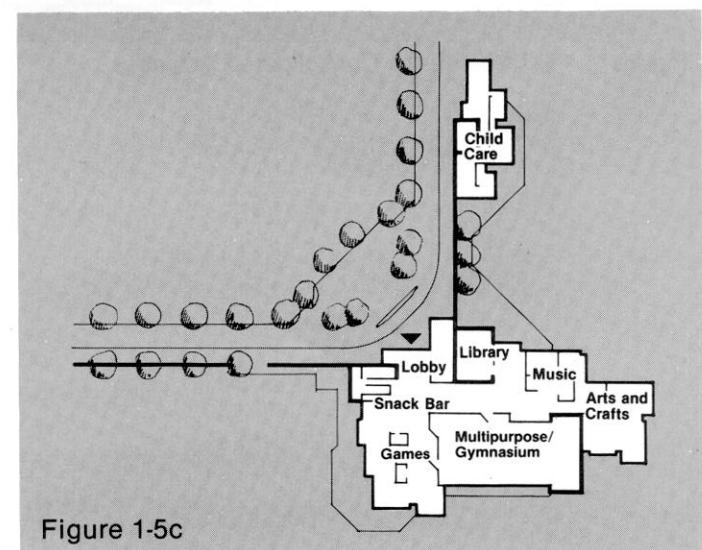


Figure 1-5c

Figures 1-5a, 1-5b, and 1-5c
Types of Community Activity Centers

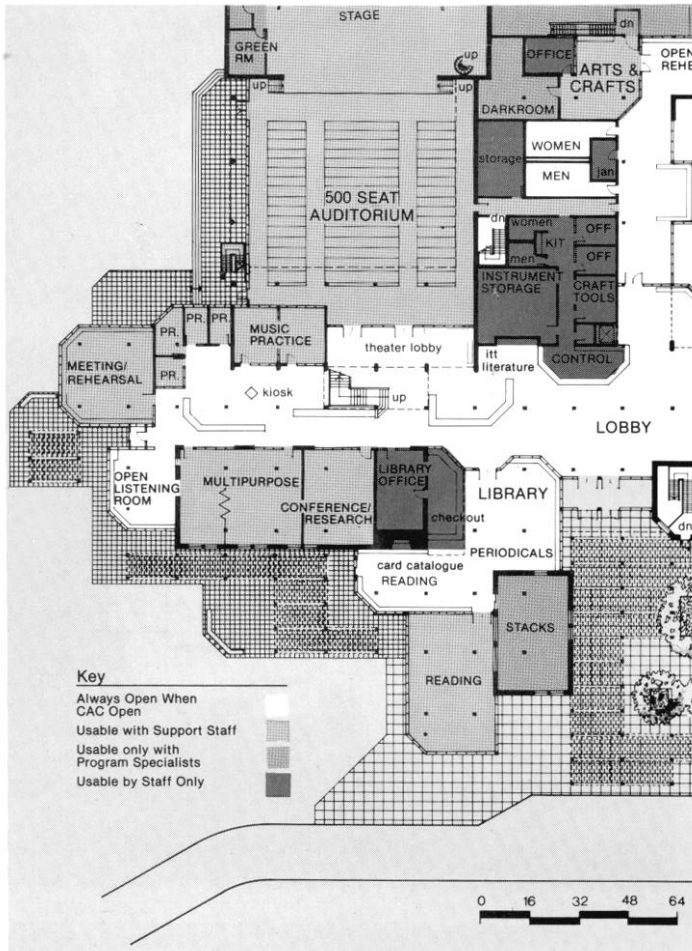


Figure 1 – 6 Design for Consolidated Activities

b. Design for Consolidated Activities. Consolidating activities encourages the growth of community life centers by permitting mutual reinforcement between activities. Design for consolidated activities involves sharing parts of activity spaces with each other, and achieving openness and visibility between them. The guidelines for consolidation address the specifics of what this means for the MSA and other community activities, which functions should be consolidated, and how relationships between them can be accommodated and operated. They help the design of facilities where activities are more accessible, visible and open to each other, while providing for more effective supervision by fewer staff.

These goals are achieved by dividing the functional spaces of the Community Activity Center into zones, to better understand which should be kept separate and supervised, and which can be shared and open. The four zones (illustrated in figure 1 - 6) are:

- (1) **Always Open** - areas open and accessible at all times when the Center is open. No supervision by a program specialist is needed.
- (2) **Usable With Support Staff** - areas that are controlled by support staff not necessarily within the same space. Again, no supervision by a program specialist is needed.
- (3) **Usable only With Program Specialists** - areas which can only be used with the supervision of program specialists.
- (4) **Usable by Staff Only** - spaces to be used by staff only, never for users.

c. Illustrative Designs. Case studies of community framework planning and Community Activity Center designs are presented in Chapter 6 for six hypothetical installations, with designs illustrating a range of CAC facility types. These designs are not definitives to be used directly at other posts. Rather, they illustrate the application to specific local situations, the planning principles and process, programming criteria, and design considerations presented in this Design Guide. Prototypical designs for Community Activity Centers for remote sites and small populations are also presented in Chapter 6.